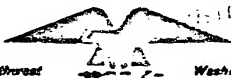


AMERICAN
FOREIGN SERVICE
ASSOCIATION

RESTRICTED

2101 E Street, Northwest



Washington, D. C. 20027 • 226-4075

March 20, 1979

Honorable Cyrus R. Vance
Secretary of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary:

The recent murder of Ambassador Dubs in Kabul points out once again the dangerous conditions under which the American Foreign Service serves abroad. His death was tragic, senseless, and unforeseeable. So long as we serve, we are committed to walk "in harm's way" as part and parcel of our responsibilities to the nation. The risk willingly assumed by Foreign Service personnel must, however, be proportioned to the national interest involved.

We are deeply concerned that this may not be the case in Tehran at present. In particular, we commend Ambassador Sullivan for his courage under fire in recent weeks and for his alertness. However, the threat to his Embassy and people posed by potential reaction to the signing of the Egypt-Israel peace treaty next week raises the real possibility that several thousand armed radical activists may move against our Embassy in furtherance of the PLO's threat to "explode" against U.S. interests.

In this situation we urgently call upon you to see that the following steps are taken:

- a high-level approach to Iranian authorities.
- the decision be taken now whether or not any unilateral U.S. effort will be made to defend the Embassy; it is imperative to avoid the chaotic last moment crisis management that left a platoon of Marines stranded in Turkey too far and too few to help and too visible to hide.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/LER

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The Secretary

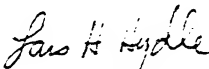
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March 20, 1979

-- an urgent reduction of the mission personnel before Monday to only the most essential volunteers. The remainder could be sent on TDY elsewhere. We understand that a recommendation has been made in favor of a total mission strength of no more than twenty over the next several months. After the immediate crisis is past, we should consider building back up to that level, but right now we should reduce our personnel from almost one hundred to a bare minimum number of volunteers as the least provocative target and most easily protected corps if need be.

In the past it has been our experience that American personnel have been held at post in needless numbers as symbolic reassurance of American support to a tottering regime or as a symbol of American presence. This practice of the previous Administration playing -- whether by policy or inadvertence -- with the lives of our personnel as political pawns has proven fruitless in Southeast Asia. After the immediate crisis has passed and our personnel are out of danger, we would ask you to personally enunciate a new, clear policy of this Administration that where chaos impends, large numbers of American personnel and their families will not be needlessly risked as political symbols of America's political commitment. The American Foreign Service Association will cooperate in giving such a clear policy statement by this Administration the widespread public recognition which it deserves.

Sincerely yours,



Lars R. Bydle
President

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